

***Phoracantha recurva* (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae) found in a cluster of bananas**

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Abstract. A dead specimen of *Phoracantha recurva* Newman, 1840 was found in a cluster of bananas, bought in a shop at Itegem (Belgium, Brabant). The origin of the bananas is unknown.

Samenvatting. *Phoracantha recurva* (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae) in een tros bananen
Een dood exemplaar van *Phoracantha recurva* Newman, 1840 werd aangetroffen in een tros bananen die gekocht werd in een winkel te Itegem (Brabant). De herkomst van de bananen kon niet achterhaald worden.

Résumé. *Phoracantha recurva* (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae) dans une grappe de bananes
Un exemplaire mort de *Phoracantha recurva* Newman, 1840 fut trouvé dans une grappe de bananes achetée dans un magasin à Itegem (Brabant). L'origine des bananes n'a pas pu être découverte.

Keywords: *Phoracantha recurva* – Cerambycidae – Belgium – Flanders – dissemination.

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At the end of April 2005 a family bought a cluster of Chiquita bananas from a local grocery store at Itegem (FS2163, Heist-op-den-Berg, Belgium, Brabant). At home they discovered a dead longhorn beetle, wedged between the bananas. A short investigation identified the specimen as *Phoracantha recurva* Newman, 1840 (Bense 1995, Sama 2002).



Phoracantha recurva Newman, 1840, ♀; iv.2005, Heist-op-den-Berg, Itegem – FS2163, leg. B. Reyndert, coll. B. Bosmans.

Cerambycidae of the genus *Phoracantha* are known as *Eucalyptus* borers. Both *P. recurva* and its close relative *P. semipunctata* (Fabricius, 1775) originate from Australia where they feed on dying or stressed *Eucalyptus*. Species of the genus *Phoracantha* have been able to establish themselves as early as 1870 over most continents with *Eucalyptus* plantings (Haugen & Iede 2005). In Europe, the first reports of *P. semipunctata* date from 1980 (Portugal)

(Haugen & Iede 2005). This species has established itself since in Spain, France, Italy, Malta, Greece and Cyprus (Sama 2005). *P. recurva* was reported for the first time from Europe in 1998, Spain (Anonymous 2005). Its distribution has been limited to Spain, Malta and Greece (Sama 2005). As *Eucalyptus* borers can fly great distances (Hanks *et al.* 1998) and are easily transported (Anonymous 2005), it can be expected that *P. recurva* will follow suite to *P. semipunctata*.

Chiquita composes its products mainly from banana plantations in Central- and South-America (Panama, Honduras, Costa-Rica, Colombia, Ecuador), Ivory Coast and, recently, from joint-ventures in Australia and the Philippines. The exact provenance of the banana cluster in question, could not be traced back to a specific country. Most of these countries have established populations of *P. recurva*. The specimen may have entered the banana transport from any of these countries. It is known that *P. semipunctata* feeds on nectar and anthers of *Eucalyptus* flowers (Hanks *et al.* 1998). As *P. recurva* is a close relative with a similar biology, it may be presumed it also feeds in the same way. Possibly, its search for food might explain its presence in a banana cluster. However, Hanks *et al.* (1998) state a preference for *Eucalyptus* flowers.

The recent record in Belgium should be viewed in regard to 'species introduction pathways'. As in our climate *Eucalyptus* is not a suitable tree for economical planting, the beetle species will not establish itself in the Belgian fauna. The find rather stresses the species' mobility and capacity to disseminate, using the most versatile pathways, among which the banana trade.

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